Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-16 (Canceled)

Claim 17. (Canceled)

Claim 18. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as set forth in claim 37, wherein said food and/or semi-luxury consumables are comminuted tobacco material.

Claim 19. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as set forth in claim 18, wherein said comminuted tobacco material is tobacco stem material.

Claims 20-21.(Canceled)

Claim 22. (Currently Amended): The apparatus as set forth in claim 37, wherein said pressure differential cellular wheel sluices ~~are cellular wheel sluices and said sluices~~ and said hyperbaric chamber are pressure proof up to a pressure burden of at least 11 bars.

Claims 23-25 (Canceled)

Claim 26. (Previously Presented): The apparatus as set forth in claim 37, wherein speed of the screw conveyor is variable.

Claim 27. (Currently Amended): The apparatus as set forth in claim 37, wherein the flanks of the screw conveyor comprise cavities through which the material can fall back.

Claims 28-36 (Canceled)

Claim 37. (Currently Amended): An apparatus for pressure conditioning, expanding and defibrating tobacco material ~~for food and/or semi-luxury consumables~~[[,]] comprising:

a hyperbaric pressure chamber having an entrance and an exit;

a screw conveyor positioned within said hyperbaric pressure chamber and between said entrance and said exit and having a progressive pitch in the direction of said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber;

a first pressure differential cellular wheel sluice structured to be pressure proofed up to a pressure burden of at least 11 bars positioned adjacent said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber;

a second pressure differential cellular wheel sluice structured to be pressure proofed up to a pressure burden of at least 11 bars positioned adjacent said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber; and,

wherein said hyperbaric pressure chamber may be variably inclined at an angle of greater than 0° and less than about 45°.

Claims 38-39 (Canceled)

Claim 40. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of Claim 37 further comprising a ~~first~~ feed shoe at said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber, said feed shoe in flow communication with a steam leakage channel.

Claim 41. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of Claim 40 further comprising a discharge shoe at said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber, said discharge shoe in flow communication with a steam extraction hood.

Claim 42. (Canceled)

Claim 43. (Currently Amended): The apparatus for conditioning of tobacco of Claim 37 further comprising a conveyance mechanism positioned below said second pressure differential cellular wheel sluice.

Claim 44. (Currently Amended): An apparatus for pre-conditioning, expanding and defibrating ~~of~~ tobacco material, comprising:

a hyperbaric pressure chamber having an entrance at a first and an exit at a second end;

a conveyance screw interior to said hyperbaric pressure chamber having a progressive pitch in a direction of said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber;

wherein said hyperbaric pressure chamber is arranged obliquely inclined upwards towards said exit;

a first pressure differential cellular wheel sluice structured to be pressure proofed up to a pressure burden of at least 11 bars positioned at said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber and contained within a feed shoe in flow communication with a first steam extraction hood;

a second pressure differential cellular wheel sluice structured to be pressure proofed up to a pressure burden of at least 11 bars positioned at said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber and contained within a discharge shoe in flow communication with a second steam extraction hood;

wherein said pressure chamber may be positioned at an upward angle of greater than 0° to about 45°.

Claim 45. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of Claim 44, wherein said conveyance screw of said hyperbaric pressure chamber has a plurality of cavities on surfaces of said conveyance screw.

Claim 46. (Canceled)

Claim 47. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of Claim 44, wherein said chamber has a bell valve at a lower section near said entrance.

Claim 48. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of Claim 44, further comprising a main steam leakage flow channel in full communication with said feed shoe at said first sluice.

Claim 49. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of Claim 48 comprising

a plurality of nozzles within said chamber in flow communication with a steam source.

Claim 50. (Currently Amended): An apparatus for conditioning, expanding and defibrating tobacco, comprising:

a hyperbaric pressure chamber having an entrance at a first lower end and an exit at a second higher end;

a conveyance screw within said hyperbaric pressure chamber having a progressive pitch in the direction of said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber;

a pressure differential cellular wheel sluice structured to be pressure proofed up to pressure burden of at least 11 bars placed at said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber and contained within a feed shoe said feed shoe entering into a steam extraction hood;

a tobacco material supply shaft entering into said feed shoe;

a discharge ~~pressurized~~ pressure differential cellular wheel sluice structured to be pressure proofed up to pressure burden of at least 11 bars at said exit of said hyperbaric pressure chamber and contained within a discharge shoe, said discharge shoe entering into a steam extraction hood;

a temperature adjustment mechanism at said sluice at said entrance of said chamber.

Claim 51. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of Claim 37 further comprising a temperature adjustment mechanism at said sluice adjacent said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber.

Claim 52. (Previously Presented): The apparatus of Claim 44 further comprising a temperature adjustment mechanism at said sluice at said entrance of said hyperbaric pressure chamber.

Claim 53. (Previously Presented): Device for pressure-conditioning, expanding and defibrating tobacco material, comprising:

a hyperbarically pressurized conditioning chamber, into which the material is introduced through an entrance;

supply nozzles for treating the material with a conditioning agent; and

an exit for extracting the material from said conditioning chamber, wherein the conditioning chamber is arranged obliquely inclined upwards and comprises a mixing conveyor by means of which the material is conveyed continuously from said entrance to said exit, ~~characterized in that the~~ said entrance and ~~the~~ exit ~~are configured as~~ comprising pressure differential ~~proof~~ cellular wheel sluices,

and the conditioning chamber is configured as a pressure proof chamber, wherein said cellular wheel sluices and ~~the~~ said conditioning chamber are structured to be pressure proofed up to a pressure burden of at least 11 bars.